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FEDERAL ASSISTANCE REVIEW

PROJECT NO. 2

SIMPLIFIED PROCESSING OF
GRANT, LOAN, COOPERATION
AGREEMENT, & TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

PROCUREMENT SECTION
CURRENT SERIAL RECORDS

FEB 2 1976

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I. I N T R O D U C T I O N

One of the objectives in the Federal Assistance Review Program is to streamline and simplify the procedures and processes for delivering Federal programs and services. The USDA Federal Assistance Review Program included a Department-wide review of assistance programs. Each Department agency conducted its own review. This report summarizes the results.

A total of 67 grant, loan, cooperative agreement, and technical assistance programs were analyzed. This analysis resulted in improving procedures in 25 programs, speedier processing in 12 of these programs, and in 10 programs, delegations were made to enable more program decisions to be made in the field. There are 12 programs in which specific improvements are in the development stage. The current status of action or accomplishments are summarized in the following two sections of this report entitled:

II. Summary of USDA Programs Analyzed and Accomplishments

III. Narrative Summary of Accomplishment By Program

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FEB 18 1970

II. SUMMARY OF USDA PROGRAMS ANALYZED AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS MADE

PROGRAM	TYPE	Processing Time (Days)			Review and Approval		Increased Delegation of Authority	Other Improvements	Further Improvements Anticipated	Unresolved Problems
		Previously Required	Reduction	% Saving	Original Steps (Show only for programs where steps eliminated)	Steps Eliminated				
<u>AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE</u>										
1. Research	Cooperative Agreement	119	-	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	-
2. Research	Grant	91	5	5%	7	2	-	Yes	-	-
<u>AGRICULTURAL STABILIZATION AND CONSERVATION SERVICE</u>										
1. Emergency Conservation	Grant	63	30	48%	11	5	Yes	-	-	Yes
2. Milk Indemnity	Grant	70	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3. Storage & Dryer	Loan	28	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4. Agricultural Conservation	Cost Sharing	63	10	16%	11	2	Yes	Yes	-	-
5. Price Support	Loan	2	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	-	-
6. Production Adjustment	Direct Payment	2	-	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	-	-

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		Previously Required	Reduction	% Saving	Original Steps (Show only for programs where steps eliminated)	Steps Eliminated				
CONSUMER & MARKETING SERVICE										
1. Employee Interchange-Meat Inspection	Cooperative Agreement	46	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2. Meat Inspection (Wholesome Meat Act)	Cooperative Agreement	98	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3. Meat Inspection (Talmadge-Aitken Act)	Cooperative Agreement	35	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4. Meat Inspection (Wholesome Meat Act and Talmadge-Aitken Act)	Grant	38	2½	7%	-	-	-	-	-	-
5. Cotton Statistics, Studies, Tests	Cooperative Agreement	84	14	17%	-	-	-	-	-	-
6. Inspection & Grading (Dairy Products)	Cooperative Agreement	77	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7. Problem Analyses-Milk Marketing Orders	Cooperative Agreement	84	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
8. Inspection-(Fruit, Vegetable, Nuts)	Cooperative Agreement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
9. Inspection (Grain) (2200 Master Agreement)	Cooperative Agreement	28	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

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		Previously Required	Reduction.	% Saving	Original Steps (Show only for programs where steps eliminated)	Steps Eliminated				
CONSUMER AND MARKETING SERVICE (Contd)										
10. Inspection (Grain)	Cooperative Agreement	196	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
11. Cowpea Testing	Cooperative Agreement	49	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
12. Inspection (Beans)	Cooperative Agreement	42	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
13. Seed Laws (Standard Agreement)	Cooperative Agreement	35	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
14. Meat Grading (Hawaii)	Cooperative Agreement	63	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15. Grading (Poultry, Eggs, Egg Products, Rabbits)	Cooperative Agreements	31	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
16. Inspection & Grading (Tobacco)	Cooperative Agreement	35	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
17. Warehouse State Law Enforcement	Cooperative Agreement	154	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
18. Market News	Cooperative Agreement	63	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

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		Previously Required	Reduction	% Saving	Original Steps (Show only for programs where steps eliminated)	Steps Eliminated				
<u>FARMERS COOPERATIVE SERVICE</u>										
1. Technical Development Service	Technical Assistance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<u>FARMERS HOME ADMINISTRATION</u>										
1. Farm Ownership	Loan	40	-	-	-	-	Yes	-	Yes	-
2. Soil & Water - Individual	Loan	30	-	-	-	-	Yes	-	Yes	-
3. Operating Loan	Loan	30	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4. Emergency Loan	Loan	30	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5. Economic Opportunity	Loan	30	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6. Rural Rental Housing	Loan	50	14	28%	3	1	Yes	-	-	-
7. Cooperative Housing	Loan	90	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
8. Farm Labor Housing	Loan/Grant	182 (60 loan only)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
9. Mutual & Self Help Rural Housing	Loan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10. Water and Sewer	Loan/Grant	90 to 180	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	-

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		Previously Required	Reduction	% Saving	Original Steps (Show only for programs where steps eliminated)	Steps Eliminated				
FARMERS HOME ADMINISTRATION (Contd)										
11. Water & Sewer Comprehensive Planning	Grant	30 to 60	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	-
12. Recreation Association	Loan	90 to 180	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
13. Resource Conservation and Development	Loan	60 to 180	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
14. Grazing Association	Loan	60 to 90	-	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	-
15. Economic Opportunity Cooperative	Loan	60 to 90	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
16. Watershed & Flood Prevention	Loan	90 to 180	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	-
17. Rural Housing (Individual)	Loan	35	14	40%	2	1	Yes	Yes	-	-
18. HUD (Sec. 235) Rural Housing	Loan	45	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
19. Low Income Housing Repair	Loan	40	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

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		Previously Required	Reduction	% Saving	Original Steps (Show only for programs where steps eliminated)	Steps Eliminated				
FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE										
1. Supplemental Food	Cooperative Agreement	70	15	21%	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
2. Commodity Distribution	Cooperative Agreement	63	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3. Commodity Distribution Amendments	Supplement to Co-operative Agreement	42	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	-	Yes
4. School Lunch	Grant	21	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5. Food Stamp	Food Stamp	91	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
FOREST SERVICE										
1. Forestry Research	Grant	203	16	8%	7	2	Yes	Yes	-	-
2. Forestry Research	Cooperative Agreement	124	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	-
3. State and Private Forestry	Grant	29	5	17%	-	-	-	-	-	-

III. NARRATIVE SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY PROGRAM

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE

1. Research (Cooperative Agreement)

No improvements to date. However, a two-phase effort is underway. Phase I is expected to reduce the number of review and approval steps and shorten processing time by 15 days (or 15 to 20 percent). Phase II has the objective of substituting a single agreement for multiple agreements between a division and each institution. If feasible, this will (a) eliminate about 25% of certain types of agreements, and (b) reduce paperwork and time involved in executing, amending, and reviewing agreements.

2. Research (Grant)

Analysis resulted in the elimination of 2 review and approval steps and 5 days (5%) reduction of processing time. An additional improvement was the elimination of transmittal letters previously prepared by the program divisions.

AGRICULTURAL STABILIZATION AND CONSERVATION SERVICE

1. Emergency Conservation (Grant)

Analysis resulted in the following improvements. For payments to \$2,500, up to five review and approval steps eliminated and 4-week reduction in processing time (90% of payments are in this category). For payments from \$2,500 to \$10,000, up to 3 review and approval steps eliminated and 3-week reduction in processing time (8% of payments are in this category). State offices have been delegated authority to approve payments from \$2,500 to \$10,000. As a result, 98% of all approvals are made outside Washington Headquarters. An unresolved problem is the need for more training of state and county committees in making objective appraisals and approvals.

2. Milk Indemnity (Grant)

No change.

AGRICULTURAL STABILIZATION AND CONSERVATION SERVICE (Contd)

3. Farm Storage Facility and Dryer (Loan)

No changes have been made as a result of the FAR effort. However, in 1967 the processing was improved by eliminating 4 steps and 5 weeks processing time for loans up to \$5,000 and 2 steps and 1 week processing time for loans from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

4. Agricultural Conservation (Cost Sharing)

Analysis resulted in the elimination of 2 review and approval steps and 10 days (16%) of processing time for special ACP projects. Authority to approve special ACP projects was delegated to state committees. (Regular ACP practices were fully decentralized prior to the FAR effort.) Other improvements include: (a) Authorized development of practices primarily for pollution abatement; (b) Policy change to divert funds from practices with benefits of limited duration to permanent practices; (c) Provided for Governor to be invited to participate in ACP Development group activities.

5. Price Support (Commodity Loan)

No changes in processing were accomplished. However, there are only 2 days processing time in this procedure. Improvements in the operation of the program include: (a) Simplified loan redemption procedures for cotton; (b) Conformance with trade practices in arriving at net quantities of soybeans; (c) Simplified extension of farm-stored resale loans, and permitted early delivery of extended loans; (d) Revised procedures for farm-stored loans to permit producers to better plan their storage needs.

6. Production Adjustment (Direct Payment Income Supplement)

No changes in processing were accomplished. However, there are only 2 days processing time in this procedure. Improvements which have been accomplished include: (a) Delegation to state committees of final authority on administrative appeals regarding feed grain bases, and yields on cotton, wheat and feed grain; (b) Delegation to state committees of authority to handle certain meritorious cases involving failure to comply

AGRICULTURAL STABILIZATION AND CONSERVATION SERVICE (Contd)

6. with cotton, wheat, and feed grain programs; (c) Delegation to county committees of authority to permit emergency grazing and haying. (This previously required action by Governors or states and approval at Washington level.); (d) Simplified payment statements; (e) Development of "intention to participate" form to ensure that only eligible producers participate; (f) Forms simplification and reduced mailings; (g) Authorization of county committees to waive requirements to enable low income producers to qualify for new farm allotments or base; (h) Elimination of requirement for producers to obtain a corporate surety bond to secure excess wheat in storage; (i) Authorized county committees to approve acreage with concurrence of state and to establish late allotments in certain cases without hearings by review committees.

CONSUMER AND MARKETING SERVICE

1. Employee Interchange - Meat and Poultry Inspection (Cooperative Agreement)

No change.

2. State-Federal Meat and Poultry Inspection-Wholesome Meat Act (Cooperative Agreement)

No change - standardized agreement.

3. Federal-State Meat and Poultry Inspection-Talmadge-Aiken Act (Cooperative Agreement)

No change.

4. Cooperative Meat and Poultry Inspection-Wholesome Meat Act & Talmadge-Aiken Act (Grant)

Analysis resulted in rescheduling of priorities involving the review process in the Consumer Protection Program Services Staff. Reduced processing time 2½ days (7%).

CONSUMER AND MARKETING SERVICE (Contd)

5. Cotton Quality Statistics, Classing & Marketing Studies, & Coordinating of Fiber Testing Programs (Cooperative Agreement)

Analysis resulted in 14 days (17%) reduction in processing time by compression of review-clearance-transmittal steps. These agreements have been in effect for many years - some need annual renewal or confirmation but several require no action for continuation.

6. Inspection and Grading of Dairy Products (Cooperative Agreement)

No changes. Unresolved problems are: (a) Inability of some states to supply qualified inspection and grading personnel, and (b) Refusal of some states to accept and use uniform nationwide USDA Standards for Grades of Dairy Products.

7. Analysis of Specific Problems Relating to Federal Milk Marketing Orders (Cooperative Agreements)

No changes. At present there are no ongoing arrangements of this type.

8. Federal-State Inspection of Fresh Fruits, Vegetables, Nuts, and Processed Fruits and Vegetables (Cooperative Agreement)

No change. These agreements have been in effect for many years. They remain in effect indefinitely and only infrequently require revision. Changes in agreements do not affect current service.

9. Grain Inspection-2200 Master Agreement (Cooperative Agreement)

No change. These agreements have been in effect for a number of years. Amendments do not disrupt normal operations. No new participants since 1955.

CONSUMER AND MARKETING SERVICE (Contd)

10. Grain Inspection (Cooperative Agreement)

No change. There are only 2 agreements of this type.

11. Trueness-to-Variety Testing of Cowpea Varieties in Channels of Commerce (Cooperative Agreement)

No change. There are only 2 agreements of this type.

12. Federal-State Bean Inspection (Cooperative Agreement)

No change. There are only 2 agreements of this type.

13. Activities Under Seed Laws (Cooperative Agreement)

No change. All states participate in this standard agreement. The last to be included was Hawaii in 1960.

14. Meat Grading-Hawaii (Cooperative Agreement)

No change.

15. Grading of Poultry, Eggs, Egg Products and Rabbits (Cooperative Agreement)

No change. Standard agreements.

16. Inspection and Grading-Tobacco (Cooperative Agreement)

No change.

CONSUMER AND MARKETING SERVICE (Contd)

17. Warehouse Inspection (Cooperative Agreement)

No change.

18. Market News (Cooperative Agreement)

No change. Unresolved problems include: (a) Difficulty in coordinating availability of state and federal funds when initiating new projects; (b) Lack of uniformity in funding. For example, we reimburse some states for services rendered while others reimburse USDA, even though the programs may be similar in size and importance; (c) Billing the State of Maryland is required before services are rendered. This has caused difficulties on occasion; (d) At times it would have been more efficient to negotiate with one group in state government rather than with each local entity.

19. Revised Agreement for Market News (Cooperative Agreement)

No change.

20. Marketing Service-204b Matching Funds Program (Cooperative Agreement)

No change.

21. Marketing Service-204b Matching Funds Program (Grant)

Analysis resulted in authorizing the Office of the Matching Fund Program to make changes up to \$1,000 in allotments without prior approval. Formerly all changes required prior approval of the Administrator. Two pilot programs are underway (Wisconsin and New York) to consolidate a number of activities within a state into one financial grant. If successful this will save paperwork and be advantageous to both federal and state governments. An unresolved problem is the curtailing of travel by a number of states due to budgeting limitations.

CONSUMER AND MARKETING SERVICE (Contd)

22. Federal-State Inspection and Grading of Agricultural Commodities and Products-
Master Agreement 1200 (Cooperative Agreement)

No change.

COOPERATIVE STATE RESEARCH SERVICE

1. Hatch Act (Grant)

Accomplishments are: (a) Elimination of division directors' overall program reviews of state stations, and (b) Elimination of OMS financial reviews in lieu of OIG or cognizant agency audit.

2. Cooperative Forestry Research-McIntire-Stennis Act (Grant)

Accomplishments are: (a) Elimination of division directors' overall program reviews of state stations, and (b) Elimination of OMS financial reviews in lieu of OIG or cognizant agency audit.

3. Research Facilities (Grant)

No change.

4. Special Research Grants-P.L. 98-106 (Grant)

Accomplishments are: (a) Elimination of division directors' overall program reviews of state stations, and (b) Elimination of OMS financial reviews in lieu of OIG or cognizant agency audit.

ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE

1. Agricultural Economic Research (Cooperative Agreement)

No change.

FARMERS COOPERATIVE SERVICE

1. Cooperative Technical Development Service (Technical Assistance)

No change.

FARMERS HOME ADMINISTRATION

1. Farm Ownership (Loan)

Analysis resulted in authorization of county supervisors to delegate loan and transfer closing authority to any bonded county employee. Increased minimum requirement from 1 to 2 designated attorneys in each county to clear title and close loans. This will increase convenience and speed service for applicants and borrowers. Improvements under consideration are: (a) Combining 2 committee reviews (tentative determination of eligibility and certification of loan amounts) into a single committee action on each application, and (b) Delegation of increased loan approval authority to district and county supervisors.

2. Soil and Water-Individual (Loan)

Analysis resulted in authorization of county supervisors to delegate loan and transfer closing authority to any bonded county employee. Increased minimum requirement from 1 to 2 designated attorneys in each county to clear title and close loans. This will increase convenience and speed service for applicants and borrowers. Improvements under consideration are: (a) Combining 2 committee reviews (tentative determination of eligibility and certification of loan amounts) into a single committee action on each application, and (b) Delegation of increased loan approval authority to district and county supervisors.

FARMERS HOME ADMINISTRATION (Contd)

3. Operating (Loan)

No change.

4. Emergency (Loan)

No change.

5. Economic Opportunity (Loan)

No change.

6. Rural Rental Housing (Loan)

Analysis resulted in increased delegated authority to state directors to approve loans up to \$200,000 for organizations and up to \$100,000 for individuals and partnerships. The National Office review of these loans has been eliminated thus reducing processing time by 14 days (28%).

7. Cooperative Housing (Loan)

No change.

8. Farm Labor Housing (Loan and Grant)

No change.

9. Mutual and Self-Help Rural Housing (Loan)

No change.

FARMERS HOME ADMINISTRATION (Contd)

10. Water and Sewer (Loan and Grant)

The Inter-Agency Committee (USDA, Interior, HUD, Commerce) has adopted uniform policy and procedures for contract bidding and awards. Increased delegated approval authority to state directors is being considered. This would eliminate National Office review prior to approval of specified types of applications.

11. Water and Sewer Comprehensive Planning (Grant)

The Inter-Agency Committee (USDA, Interior, HUD, Commerce) has adopted uniform policy and procedures for contract bidding and awards. Increased delegated approval authority to state directors is being considered. This would eliminate National Office review prior to approval of specified types of applications.

12. Recreation Association (Loan)

No change.

13. Resource Conservation and Development (Loan)

No change.

14. Grazing Association (Loan)

Increased delegated approval authority to state directors is being considered. This would eliminate National Office review prior to approval of specified types of applications.

15. Economic Opportunity-Cooperative (Loan)

No change.

FARMERS HOME ADMINISTRATION (Contd)

16. Watershed and Flood Prevention (Loan)

The Inter-Agency Committee (USDA, Interior, HUD, Commerce) has adopted uniform policy and procedures for contract bidding and awards. Increased delegated approval authority to state directors is being considered. This would eliminate National Office review prior to approval of specified types of applications.

17. Rural Housing-Individual (Loan)

Analysis resulted in the elimination of review and approval by district supervisors and a 14-day (40%) reduction in processing time. Loan approval authority for non-farm tracts which they have appraised has been delegated to county supervisor appraisers. A new application form has been developed which, if approved by BOB, will eliminate up to 3 forms for 90% of the applications.

18. HUD Rural Housing-Sec. 235 (Loan)

No change.

19. Low Income Housing Repair (Loan)

No change.

FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE

1. Supplemental Food (Cooperative Agreement)

Analysis resulted in a 15-day (21%) reduction in processing time. It is planned that by July 1, 1970 authority will be delegated to regional offices to approve applications and commit funds. This will eliminate 2 review and approval steps and will further reduce processing time by 7 days. Additional accomplishments are expected through revision of regulations, instructions, and informational material. Unresolved problems include: (a) Appropriation Act designation of amounts which can be expended in localities creates problems, and (b) Appropriations will be inadequate to meet program needs.

2. Commodity Distribution (Cooperative Agreement)

No change.

3. Commodity Distribution Amendments to State Plans of Operations (Supplement to Cooperative Agreement)

Uniform formats have been developed. Unresolved problems include: (a) Lack of uniform state standards for eligibility and (b) Lack of uniform plans for coordination and cooperation with other Federal agencies.

4. National School Lunch (Grant)

The unresolved problems of (a) Delay in passage of annual appropriations and (b) Obtaining program participation data from states, should be cured by pending legislation which provides for appropriation of funds a year in advance of use.

5. Food Stamps

No change.

FOREST SERVICE

1. Forestry Research (Grant)

Analysis resulted in the elimination of 2 review and approval steps and a reduction of processing time of 16 days (8%). The authority to award grants under P.L. 85-934 and 89-106 is being delegated to directors of 8 research stations, the Forest Products Laboratory, and the Institute of Tropical Forestry. Formal documentation of the grant as a work unit and the related CRIS documentation have been eliminated.

2. Forestry Research (Cooperative Agreement)

New criteria for determining when fiscal audits should be made will reduce the need for fiscal audits on 20% of the agreements. Less than 2% of cooperative agreements require prior approval before a Station Director may execute the agreement. The possibility to further reduce the need for prior approval is being explored.

3. State and Private Forestry (Grant-in-Aid)

The average processing time was reduced 5 days (17%) from the average processing time in the prior year.

SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

1. Great Plains Conservation (Technical Assistance)

Agreement has been reached and regulation changes are being processed to delegate authority to designate new counties from the Secretary to the Administrator of SCS. This will reduce processing time and the number of steps required to process requests for designation. It will improve responses to requests from local people.

There is need to review the procedure for making changes in the state practice list and cost-share rates with appropriate personnel in ASCS. Steps are being taken to arrange for review which could result in further simplification of operating procedures.

SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE (Contd)

2. Watershed Protection and Flood Control (Technical Assistance-Planning Phase)

From 4 to 20 days reduced processing time has resulted from computer use in program planning. As this improvement becomes fully operational and more data from river basin studies become available, the need for field examination may be eliminated. An amendment to P.L.-566 has been proposed to increase authority for administrative approval of projects up to \$500,000. If passed, this will reduce the number of projects needing Congressional and Executive Branch review. Budgetary and employment ceiling constraints have resulted in a backlog of over 1,300 unserviced applications and an average of 8 years lag time between receipt of application and authorization to complete project plans. BOB requirement that projects over \$5 million Federal funds be considered a separate line item in the Federal budget adds several steps to the processing cycle. Problems result from state agency reluctance to use available authorities to correct drainage from mining operations (in some instances additional authority is needed). On occasion, delayed responses from other Federal agencies has caused serious delay in planning and has damaged relations with local sponsors. Other constraints which delay Congressional approval or hamper effective planning are: (a) Requiring flood prevention to be dominant purpose of all projects; (b) Not approving projects which contain single-purpose recreation structures; (c) Requiring projects to be economically justified before considering secondary, redevelopment, and incidental benefits; (d) Prohibiting use of P.L-566 funds for improvements of public lands.

3. Resource Conservation and Development (Technical Assistance-Planning)

Analysis resulted in a reduction in processing time of 21 days (82%). An unresolved problem is that applications are received at a rate that is beyond ability to service due to limits on number of new starts and insufficient program monies. This negates prompt action on all applications.

STATISTICAL REPORTING SERVICE

1. Statistical Reporting (Cooperative Agreement)

No change. These agreements are in force indefinitely. The last general revision was made in 1961. At that time many of the agreements had been in effect for 25 or more years.

